

Department of Human Services

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<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
* Foster Care	2-4
Child Abuse/Neglect/Protection	5-9
Health Care	10-12
Juvenile Justice	13-14
Child Support	15
Domestic Violence	16
Charities	17
DHS Employees	18-19
Riverfront Development	20

*Important story at this spot

Expert to examine foster care

State agrees to release sampling of files

August 8, 2007

BY JACK KRESNAK

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Lawyers for the state and a children's advocacy group suing on behalf of 19,000 foster children agreed Tuesday to have an independent expert examine a random sampling of children's case files to try to identify problems in the child welfare system.

U.S. District Judge Nancy Edmunds approved the agreement.

Advertisement

New York-based Children's Rights has filed a class action against the Department of Human Services, alleging widespread violations of thousands of foster children's civil rights.

The two sides agreed that the expert will be Christopher Baird of the Children's Research Center in Madison, Wis., which is affiliated with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. Both groups study child welfare and juvenile justice issues. Baird, who has done similar research in other states sued by Children's Rights, will examine a random sampling of 460 foster care case files.

Left unsettled Tuesday was a dispute over the state's refusal to release unredacted case files of six foster children specifically named in the Children's Rights lawsuit and 67 foster children who died while in the child welfare system since Jan. 1, 2004. Officials said most of those children died of natural causes, but Children's Rights wants to know whether those deaths could have been prevented.

Attorney Samuel Damren, representing Children's Rights, said the group needs complete case files of those children to assess whether the state provided adequate services for kids in its care, including whether they were placed with suitable relatives or foster parents.

Lawyer Jay Yelton, whose firm the DHS hired, said the state must ensure the privacy of others in those files and the DHS needs time to redact - or obscure -- their names, Social Security numbers and other information about them.

U.S. District Magistrate Judge Donald Scheer, who hears evidentiary motions for Judge Edmunds, took the Children's Rights request under advisement and will rule on it soon.

A trial on the class action is scheduled for June 3, 2008.

Find this article at:

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070808/NEWS06/708080349/1001/NEWS>

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U.S. judge names expert to assess Michigan foster care system

DETROIT – (AP) A federal judge hearing a lawsuit challenging how Michigan cares for 19,000 foster children has approved the hiring of an expert to help assess the system's performance.

U.S. District Judge Nancy G. Edmunds on Tuesday directed that Christopher Baird of the Children's Research Center study a random sample of 460 Michigan foster care files, according to the Detroit Free Press.

The Madison, Wis.-based center is affiliated with the National Council on Crime and Delinquency.

The New York-based advocacy group Children's Rights sued to see documents related to foster children who died while under state care. It said the Michigan Department of Human Services has not complied with requests for the documents.

The department said the information is confidential.

Edmunds ordered the state to release certain documents by Aug. 31, The Detroit News said.

The suit says that the state's foster care system has for years been plagued by shortcomings in resources and services that have resulted in inadequate physical and mental care and foster children being repeatedly moved between homes.

August 8, 2007



THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

State system creates too many orphans Laws let kids languish in foster care

Wednesday, August 08, 2007

Michigan is making orphans out of too many children. It's an unintended consequence of laws passed in the 1990s making it easier for judges to terminate parental rights.

The ambitious goal was to quickly get abused and neglected children into stable, permanent homes. The reality has been thousands of children becoming wards of the state, then languishing in foster care for years before aging out of the system. Lawmakers need to revisit, and revamp, laws that have doubled the number of orphans in the state since 1994.

Michigan had 2,972 legal orphans 13 years ago. Last year there were 6,292, not including the 536 who aged out of the system because they turned 18. The latest Kids Count in Michigan report released in July found almost 28,000 state children received foster care services in 2004. It rightly calls on lawmakers to re-examine the foster care laws.

Foster care was never meant to be a permanent situation for children taken from their parents. But each year, hundreds of youngsters who've been in the system for years, age out of foster care without ever having a permanent home.

A report by the state's Foster Care Review Board in June said the growth of state wards and increasing case loads for foster care workers might partially explain why some children have been abused or died in foster care. Gov. Jennifer Granholm is seeking funds to hire more than 250 workers to find permanent homes for children in the foster care system.

While the state must be zealous in protecting children by removing them from abusive or neglectful homes, it can not be overzealous in permanently cutting parental ties, especially with older children. The sad fact is that once children reach age 11, there is little chance of them being adopted out of foster care. Three quarters of the children adopted from foster care are taken by age 10. That means options other than adoption are needed to find permanent homes for older children.

Recommendations from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which does the Kids Count study, include programs such as permanent guardianships, which allow children to maintain legal ties to their parents while being raised by someone else. Michigan ought to try such programs. They have been used with good effect in other states. Guardianship programs can provide financial assistance commensurate with adoption assistance, allowing children who can't go home to live permanently with relatives, foster parents and other adults, without being adopted by them. Another suggestion is to let judges create temporary legal guardians for foster children. That leaves open the possibility of a reunion if parents rehabilitate themselves.

Those ideas could be good options for older children, who often don't want to permanently cut ties with their parents.

Michigan already is trying the "Family to Family" approach to foster care, which aims to keep abused and neglected children with their families when it can be done safely, with relatives or at least in their home communities. Research funded by the Casey Foundation says children are less traumatized by removal from their families if they are not also removed from their schools, neighborhoods and other supports that are familiar to them.

At any given time up to 19,000 children are in foster care in Michigan. Too many of them are spending years in the system without being returned to their families or adopted. For our children's sake, the state must find better options.

The Grand Rapids Press

Detroit Free Press

August 8, 2007

Man is held in death of baby

A 35-year-old Detroit man is in the Wayne County Jail charged in the death of his girlfriend's year-old baby.

Oronde MaKonnen Graham was arraigned Monday on felony murder, involuntary manslaughter and first- and second-degree child abuse charges in the July 26 shaking that left Diamond Reynolds mortally injured.

Diamond, who had been taken to Children's Hospital of Michigan, was taken off life support the next day, and the Wayne County Medical Examiner classified her death as a homicide, saying the child had been shaken violently enough to cause brain damage.

The baby's mother, Ashley Crump, 22, told police she had left her three children in the care of Graham, who was her live-in boyfriend, that day and that he soon called her to come home because Diamond was choking on a piece of ice and could not breathe.

Graham was arraigned before District Court Judge Charles Anderson III who ordered him held in lieu of 10% of a \$500,000 bond pending an Aug. 16 preliminary examination.

MOUNT CLEMENS -- The run is over for Marvin Blocker and Tanya Humphreys.

The couple, who failed to appear in Macomb County Circuit Court on drug charges last week, appeared in court Tuesday after they were arrested in Virginia over the weekend.

Shuffling into the courtroom of Judge Edward Servitto Jr. wearing blue prison jumpsuits, with their arms handcuffed together, Blocker and Humphreys stood mute as the judge set their court dates and bonds.

"There will be no bond set on the contempt (charges), nor will there be bond on the underlying charge," Servitto said. "They are not getting a bond. They are staying where they are."

Blocker and Humphreys are charged with six drug counts and one count of second-degree child abuse. Police say they kept drugs in their home near their five children. Blocker is also charged with resisting a police officer. The pair were free on bond leading up to their trial date last Thursday, and when they failed to appear, Servitto canceled their bond and issued a bench warrant for their arrest.

The pair are scheduled to return to court today for a contempt hearing to explain why they did not show up for court. Servitto set an Aug. 31 trial date.

"We are going to get it tried right away," he said.

Blocker and Humphreys were arrested Jan. 31 after a raid on their Clinton Township mobile home by officers from the County of Macomb Enforcement Team and Clinton Township. When inside, officers found crack cocaine, marijuana, ecstasy and prescription drugs in the trailer within reach of the five children, all of whom were under 5.

The pair were arrested Sunday night by bail enforcement agents Chris Ragone and Rex Crockett in Natural Bridge, Va. The couple had fled to the rural community where Humphreys' mother and stepfather lived.

They had been staying in a home owned by Humphreys' stepfather, and were taken into custody without incident, Ragone said.

"I didn't realize the scope (of the crime) until I Googled their names," Ragone said.

Just as he and Crockett were about to start searching local motels, Ragone received a call from the stepfather, who directed them to the couple's location, where they were arrested.

He and his partner drove the pair to Cleveland, where they turned them over to the Macomb County agencies that held their bond.

"It was fairly routine," he said.

You can reach Edward L. Cardenas at (586) 468-0529 or ecardenas@detnews.com.

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Fear turns to flight for drug defendants

Fugitives downplay their alleged wrongdoing.

By Jameson Cook

Macomb Daily Staff Writer

A pair of suspected drug dealers who illegally left the state while on bond said they fled because they were afraid of going to prison, according to one of the men who captured them.

"They were scared and didn't want to go to jail," said Chris Ragone, owner of Executive Security Concepts in Roanoke, Va. "They said they felt like what they did wasn't that bad, and they didn't like the way they were being treated."

Marvin J. Blocker, 25, and Tanya R. Humphreys, 24, both of Clinton Township, appeared Tuesday in front of Judge Edward Servitto, who revoked his \$50,000 bond and her \$30,000 bond and set a new trial date of Aug. 31 for their various drug charges.

They are scheduled to appear in front of Servitto again today to answer a contempt of court charge and for a pretrial on the drug case.

After withdrawing no contest pleas, the pair were set to go to trial Aug. 1 on charges related to a Jan. 31 police raid on their mobile home in which officers discovered Ecstasy pills in candy wrappers, crack cocaine in baby diapers, and cocaine residue in baby jars, among other drugs.

The pair told Ragone they took a bus to Virginia, Ragone said. It appears they had only been there a short time because Humphreys didn't have time to visit her daughter and their travel bags appeared mostly undisturbed, Ragone said.

Owners of two local bail bonds companies had hired Ragone after they discovered the Virginia address for Humphreys' stepfather, Robert Vittigglio. Ragone and his director of operations, Rex Crockett, caught and drove them to a city near Cleveland, where the local bondsmen picked them up to bring to Macomb on Monday.

Blocker and Humphreys were cooperative when the bondsmen found them in a second home owned by Vittigglio in Natural Bridge, Va., Ragone said.

"He (Blocker) said, 'We won't give you any trouble,'" Ragone said. "She was very quiet."

Ragone and Crockett, along with two police officers, had gone to Vittigglio's primary residence, where he and Humphreys' mother initially denied the fugitives were there. A 7-year-old girl who was identified as Tanya's daughter also was there, Ragone said.

"They claimed they hadn't seen Tanya in over a year," Ragone said.

But driving away, Crockett told Ragone "it didn't feel right" because the parents reacted calmly to the news their daughter was a fugitive, Ragone said.

"They appeared too calm; they had everything down pat," he said.

The bondsmen left the home but decided to check motels in the area. While driving, Vittigglio telephoned Crockett and said his daughter was staying at his second home a few miles away. Vittigglio said he was initially deceptive because he didn't want to get in trouble,

Ragone said.

The case has garnered a great deal of attention, initially due to the drugs being kept with the children's items and within reach of five children aged 5 and under residing there, for which they faces a second-degree child abuse charge. All of the children are believed to be Blocker's, and Humphreys is the mother of one or two of them.

About two months after their arrest, a circuit judge reduced Blocker's bond from \$300,000 to \$100,000, and Humphreys' from \$50,000 and \$30,000, allowing both to post bond with the help of the bond companies.

Both of them agreed to plead no contest to all of the charges, but on June 27 Humphreys fainted outside the courtroom and later withdrew her plea, and Blocker withdrew his plea fired his first attorney.

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http://www.macombdaily.com/stories/080807/loc_20070808005.shtml

Detroit Free Press

Wayne County news briefs

August 8, 2007

Woman's sentencing set in child-for-sex case

A Taylor woman accused of trying to sell her 7-year-old daughter for sex pleaded no contest last week.

She entered her plea in Wayne County's Third Circuit Court on Thursday, the county Prosecutor's Office said.

The Free Press isn't naming the defendant to protect her identities of her five children, ages 6-12.

The 34-year-old's sentencing is 9 a.m. Thursday.



KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

Children's health insurance coverage must be reauthorized, expanded

Wednesday, August 08, 2007

By Kimberly Crider

We, the partners of the Kalamazoo County Poverty Reduction Initiative, are writing to underscore the need for children in our community to have access to the state's health insurance program, MICHild. There are approximately 110,000 children in Michigan who lack health insurance, and children in Kalamazoo County are not exempt from this growing problem.

Health insurance is an essential component to a child's well-being. Children who have health insurance are more likely to get the health care services they need and to have both a usual source of care and access to preventative care. Additionally, investing in children's health yields many benefits, including improved development, improved school performance and long-term savings in health care costs.

The State Children's Health Insurance Program, or SCHIP, was created in 1997 to provide health care for children in families who earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but are still unable to afford private health insurance. The program is financed jointly by states and the federal government and provides comprehensive health insurance coverage to more than 4 million low-income children, most of whom otherwise would be uninsured. Locally, approximately 530 Kalamazoo County children are enrolled in the MICHild program. The program has led to marked declines in the number of uninsured children, yet the staggering number of uninsured children in this country illustrates that there still is a great deal of work to be done.

We believe that the MICHild program provides a needed safety net for many low-income families in our community. One example of this comes from a family in Vicksburg. One of the married couple's four children, Terri, has allergies and, as Terri's mom says, "There is no way we could afford to take her to the doctor or pay for the medication without MICHild." This family, where the dad works full-time and the mom works part-time, used to receive Medicaid, and because the father is working hard and has received several raises, they no longer qualify for Medicaid. The company where the husband works is small and it would be too expensive for them to afford the employer-sponsored insurance so, as the mother says, they "would be lost without it (MICHild)." Neither parent has health insurance, but they are most concerned that their children have access to the health care they need.

Currently, legislators are engaging in reauthorization discussions around SCHIP, and we strongly believe three important elements should be a part of the reauthorization:

1. Expand funding for SCHIP. We believe that the SCHIP allocation needs to be at \$50 billion over five years; otherwise, by 2009, Michigan will not be able to maintain services for the current recipients, yet alone the estimated 110,000 children who are eligible but not enrolled.
2. Protect and strengthen Medicaid. In order for SCHIP to succeed, Medicaid must remain strong. Each program reaches a different population of eligible children, and cutting Medicaid funding as a means of financing SCHIP means that one group of children -- the poorest -- would be uninsured.
3. Broaden access to care. States should be provided with flexibility to use SCHIP funding to expand access to coverage for dental and mental health services, as well as cover pregnant women and other populations, including legal immigrant children.

We strongly encourage all Kalamazoo County residents to make sure that the children in our community have the necessary health care they need by contacting U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, U.S. Sen. Carl Levin and U.S. Rep. Fred Upton and letting them know it's important to you that more children have access to MICHild.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Janice Brown, Kalamazoo Public Schools; Don Cooney, City of Kalamazoo; Kimberly Crider, Poverty Reduction Initiative; John Dilworth, Goodwill Industries; Kennedy Fillar, Comerica Bank; Brian Johnson, Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners; Jerome Kisscorni, City of Kalamazoo; Bruce Kocher, Kalamazoo Valley Community College; Ann Perry, League of Women Voters; Maria Philbrick, Hispanic Leadership Coalition of Kalamazoo; Ed Pigeon, Gun Lake Tribe; Michael Reed, consultant; Donald Roberts, Legal Aid of Western Michigan; Steward Sandstrom, Kalamazoo Regional Chamber of Commerce; Bob Straits, W.E. Upjohn Institute; Sherry Thomas-Cloud, Kalamazoo County Department of Human Services; Milton Wells, Open Door Ministries; and Barbara Young, Kalamazoo County Community Action Bureau.

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Muskegon Chronicle

Health-care clinics to host events

Tuesday, August 07, 2007

FROM LOCAL REPORTS

Muskegon's two federally designated health-care clinics are celebrating National Health Center Week with a series of events this week.

Muskegon Family Care and Hackley Community Care provide free health and dental care to tens of thousands of low-income residents each year.

There are an estimated 18,000 uninsured people in Muskegon County. Nationally, about 47 million Americans lack health insurance and that figure is growing by 1.5 million people annually, according government data.

Muskegon Family Care, 2201 S. Getty in Muskegon Heights, and Hackley Community Care, 2700 Baker in Muskegon, provide basic health and dental care to all people regardless of their ability to pay.

Muskegon Family Care is sponsoring three events, all of which are open to the public, to celebrate National Health Center Week.

The clinic hosted a car seat safety check and ice cream social from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. today at the Muskegon General Campus of Mercy General Health Partners, 1700 Oak.

Muskegon Family Care will give children free bike helmets at a bike rodeo and ice cream social 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday at the clinic's Getty Street location.

The clinic also is hosting a fundraising dinner and silent auction Friday, beginning at 6 p.m., at the Muskegon Country Club. Tickets are \$40 per person, \$75 per couple or \$285 for a table of eight. Tickets may be purchased at Muskegon Family Care or by calling Karen Broton, 737-1726.

Hackley Community Care will mark National Health Center Week by offering well-child examinations and child immunizations for the clinic's own Medicaid patients today through Thursday, from 10 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

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Juvenile detention center back under control

August 8, 2007

By JACK KRESNAK

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

The state license to operate the Wayne County Juvenile Detention Facility, which was jeopardized a year ago due to incidents of juvenile residents assaulting staff and other residents, has made a positive turnaround, county officials said Wednesday.

Sharon Banks, spokeswoman for Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano, said the nine-year-old facility in downtown Detroit had been returned to "regular license" status by the state's Office of Children and Adult Licensing, the Department of Human Services division that licenses all facilities and homes that care for abused, neglected or delinquent children.

Advertisement

After a review last week, OCAL said the facility now is operating in near flawless fashion and raised its license to "regular" status after losing that status in July 2006. If the review had gone badly, the third "provisional" license could have jeopardized funding from state and federal sources that require such facilities to be in compliance with regulations, said Leonard Dixon, the facility director.

Dixon, who had been director when the facility was built and opened in 1998 and then left the county in 2004, returned to his old job on June 1 after a series of problems at the facility, including a few incidents of marijuana smoking by detained juveniles, led to the firing of the former director and deputy director.

"We went back to basics," said Dixon. "People were off track and we got them back on track again. I didn't have to do much discipline at all. The staff just really conformed to what we asked them to do."

Dixon said that on his first day back he met with the staff and youths as a group in all 12 of the facilities' units to make sure they knew that workers and kids both would be held accountable for misbehavior. Dixon instituted a "due process" system for youths including the earning of privileges to, say, watch television or play video games.

Officials with the Wayne County Department of Child and Family Services worked with Dixon to reduce the population of juvenile delinquents awaiting trial or placement in other programs from more than 180 to about 150.

Dixon was appointed in 2004 to a post at the state Department of Human Services as director of the Bureau of Juvenile Justice, a position he someday may return to. He was granted a leave of absence to return to the directorship.

To read the facility's licensing reports for the past 18 months go to: http://www.dleg.state.mi.us/brs_cwl/dt_cwl.asp?CWL_NBR=CE820201498&cnty_name=WAYNE

,i>Contact **JACK KRESNAK** at 313-223-4544 or jkresnak@freepress.com.

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One sentenced in hazing incident

, August 6/, 2007

The first of the four students expelled from Coopersville Area Public Schools in connection with several hazing incidents this spring has been placed on probation for his actions.

The 15-year old male, who pleaded guilty to one count of gross indecency, has been placed on probation for six months, will do 14 hours of community service, and counseling as ordered by the court psychologist. The sentence was handed down last week by Juvenile Court referee Barbara Foreman.

The other three are awaiting trial.

The four students were charged in connection with 13 different hazing incidents, which reportedly took place in April and May involving two other members of the Coopersville junior varsity baseball team.

The Coopersville Area Public Schools Board of Education in May expelled the four students for a minimum of one year and ordered them to perform 80 hours of community service.

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Child support system 'broken'

FLINT JOURNAL LETTER TO THE EDITOR

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Wednesday, August 08, 2007

Journal Reader

In response to ["Child support, bonding goals of program," Local News, July 30, Page A3], this new idea sounds good on paper, just like the Friend of the Court, but how long until it becomes a full blown joke, just like the Friend of the Court and the way that child support is calculated?

The real problem here is not that noncustodial parents don't want to support their children, it's because they cannot afford to. What Genesee Family Court Judge Michael J. Theile needs to do is look at what the custodial and noncustodial parent has coming in as far as money, then look at what each has in expenses, and then calculate what child support should be afterward.

Our system is broken. The only way to fix it is close it down and rebuild it, unlike the way the system is now.

Chuck Wells

Flint

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Article published Aug 7, 2007

Search yields few clues

While murder suspect Gordon G. Dotson sat in jail Monday after telling a judge he was not interested in a bond, law enforcement officials searched fields, woods and trash cans for evidence.

Mr. Dotson, 65, is charged with stabbing his wife to death, which police say happened during an argument over his money-spending habits. Betty A. Dotson, 65, was found dead in the couple's trailer at the Frenchtown Villa Mobile Home Park Friday. She died of multiple stab wounds.

Mr. Dotson, who had been married to his wife for 48 years, was in court Monday for his arraignment. Shackled and wearing a black-and-white striped jail uniform, Mr. Dotson told First District Judge Terrence Bronson that he has an attorney but he needs to contact him. He also told the judge he was not interested in being released.

"I don't want no bond," Mr. Dotson told the judge. "I'll stay here."

The judge issued a \$1 million bond and Mr. Dotson was remanded to jail.

After the hearing, a group of sheriff's detectives and reserve deputies began searching bean fields and a wooded area behind the Fifth Wheel restaurant on N. Telegraph Rd. On a hot, muggy afternoon, the group slowly made its way through thick brush, looking for any clues.

Detective Sgt. Enrico Galimberti said they specifically were looking for a missing phone base and any other evidence in the case. He said during interviews Mr. Dotson told him that he frequented that area with a friend.

"He told us he went back there," Sgt. Galimberti said. "It was a total hunch."

Nothing was discovered in the search, but Sgt. Galimberti said the case is solid against the defendant. He said there are no other suspects at this time and he does not expect any additional arrests.

The motive in the slaying appears to involve Mr. Dotson's spending habits, police say. Sgt. Galimberti said the defendant is a retired autoworker and the couple had a limited income.

On the day of his wife's murder, Mr. Dotson allegedly withdrew several hundred dollars from their account, police said

"The motive is leaning toward his penchant to spend money," Sgt. Galimberti said.

During extensive interviews with detectives, Mr. Dotson denied killing his wife. Sgt. Galimberti said the defendant said he arrived home Friday afternoon and found his wife dead in a living room chair. He then went to a neighbor's home and 911 was called.

There were no signs of forced entry in the couple's mobile home on Maurice Ct. A lock box belonging to the victim had been found forced open, Sgt. Galimberti said. A nearby safe, belonging to Mr. Dotson, was untouched.

A close friend of the defendant was shocked to learn that he was charged with murder.

Roy Farmer, who lives on Chalet Ct. near the Dotson home, said he has been friends with Mr. Dotson for 15 years. While detectives in fatigues searched bushes and trash cans, Mr. Farmer stood nearby and shook his head.

"They've been good neighbors; I can't believe it," Mr. Farmer said. "I never had no problems with them. For all I know, they were getting along all right. I never knew them to have any problems."

Mr. Dotson's preliminary examination is set for 2 p.m. Aug. 20.



Carriage Town Ministries to help 300 school kids

Hometown Headlines

FLINT

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Wednesday, August 08, 2007

By George Jaksa

Journal Staff Writer

FLINT - Carriage Town Ministries plans to help needy area youths with clothing and school supplies in its annual "Klothes 4 Kids" program.

The ministry will accept the first 300 eligible kids during a 9:30 a.m.-noon sign-up Aug. 20 in the gymnasium of its family center, 705 Garland St. Recipients will get two complete uniforms, a voucher for shoes and a backpack of school supplies, according to a Carriage Town news release.

To qualify, parents need to bring a Social Security card, photo identification, proof of income, identification for their children and proof of custody.

- George Jaksa

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Lansing at-large race results

Evening update

Tom Lambert
Lansing State Journal

Incumbents Carol Wood, 57, and Derrick Quinney, 52, advanced to the general election in the at-large races for two Lansing City Council seats.

They will be joined by Gina Nelson, 49, a case worker with the state Department of Human Services, and Robert Clark, 22, who works for Lansing Community College part time moving furniture and setting up offices.

The other candidates were Jonathan Solis, 29, an employee at Southside Community Coalition, and Willie Fuller, 57, a retired General Motors Corp. worker in the Nov. 6 election.

The top four vote-getters in the at-large races advance to the Nov. 6 general election to vie for two at-large seats.

Contact Tom Lambert at 377-1063 or tlambert@lsj.com.

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[\[Back\]](#)

People making news

Detroit Free Press

August 8, 2007

Kristen McDonald has joined the Skillman Foundation as senior program officer and will manage the foundation's education and early childhood work. She has 15 years of public policy experience and was one of the architects of Michigan's early childhood system, Great Start. McDonald served as chief of staff for the Michigan Department of Education. Before that she was a policy adviser and federal legislative liaison for the Michigan Department of Human Services.



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Published August 7, 2007

Lansing gets OK to sell parking ramp

Evening update

Lansing voters gave city officials permission to sell the South Grand Avenue parking ramp, which developers want as part of a riverfront high-rise that will stretch up 12 to 20 stories.

The project, which would cost \$30 million and be built on the site of the former City Club, would include 150 to 200 residential units that would be sold, as well as space for high-end dining, a health club and other services, the developers said.

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